

## **Chargers Offseason Media Availability, Phase One**

**Monday, April 8, 2024 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.**

### **PASSING GAME COORDINATOR MARCUS BRADY**

#### **On his 'prior connection' to Head Coach Jim Harbaugh:**

"Just a mutual acquaintance. [Senior Offensive Assistant] Marc Trestman, who's on staff, obviously, I've worked with him quite a bit in the CFL. We've had a great relationship. He's my mentor. He's also Jim's [Harbaugh] mentor, so that's kind of where that connection came through. Then, I spoke to Jim on the phone, we got to know each other and started talking. I'm here."

#### **On QB Justin Herbert and what was 'going through his mind' when 'presented with the opportunity' to join the Chargers' staff:**

"Well, obviously, I watched [QB] Justin [Herbert] coming out in college. I was always impressed with what he is capable of doing. Then, obviously, what he's done over the past few years, early in his career. Just the opportunity be able to work with him — as we know, to win in this league, you have to have a good quarterback, and we have one here. Blessed for this opportunity to be able to work with him now. Have to find ways to get us going."

#### **On his 'early impressions' of Harbaugh:**

"Jim [Harbaugh] has been awesome. He's very passionate, loves ball. Punctual. He's just getting us going here, as a group. He's all about building relationships with one another, on staff, and then with the players, now that we got them in."

#### **On if he 'knew much about' Harbaugh prior to joining the Chargers' staff:**

"No, I mean, I'm learning, too. Getting to know him, it's been great. Working on our relationship together. I got here early. As one of the early guys on staff, I got a chance to work with him as we were actually interviewing other coaches. The relationship is just going to continue to build."

#### **On 'what the passing game will look like':**

"It's kind of too early to say right now. Talking to [Offensive Coordinator] Greg [Roman], talking to Jim [Harbaugh], we are going to be a balanced team. Yes, we are going to run the ball, but we have a quarterback that can sling it, as well. We're going to get to that point. We're just getting started. We've only, really, been in with the players for a week. Right now, it's just about learning the terminology and learning to be able to communicate with each other about the plays. We're kind of getting more into our identity and who we're going to be as we continue to grow."

**On his role as Passing Game Coordinator:**

"Helping out everywhere I can. Right now, I'm in the quarterback room with [Quarterbacks Coach] Shane [Day]. Jim [Harbaugh] pops in there, as well. I'm in there, Marc Trestman, we're all in there working with the quarterbacks. I'll be heavily involved in the gameplanning, working with Greg [Roman] and giving my perspective. We're all going to have our parts that we're breaking down — whether I'm going to be third-down, red zone, we're all going to have different areas. We'll finalize that as we continue to work through the staff, as far as what our in-season responsibilities are. Right now, it's just teaching these guys the offense. Then, kind of go from there. But, yes, I'll be heavily involved — more so, obviously, in the passing game."

**On his 'prior connection' with Day:**

"I knew who he was. We've worked with common coaches, who have spoken highly of him. I got a chance to talk to him before we even interviewed him. It's been great. We have a really good relationship. We kind of see the game very similar, which I think that's going to speed up the process with us, as we get on the same page here."

**On Herbert:**

"He's been great in the meeting room. I mean, it's like going to Spanish class right now, they're all just learning new terminology [laughter]. But, he's locked in. If there's something that he doesn't know, he's asking questions. Today, Shane [Day] had a chance to get them on the board to see where they were, because we have just been kind of throwing a lot at them. It's like a fire hose, we're just throwing the entire offense at them, seeing what sticks, and then going back and reviewing everything. Getting on the board today with these guys, calling out plays, letting them draw it up, go through their reads, he's on it. All three quarterbacks in the room, they're on it right now."

**On Day's relationship with Herbert and if that is a benefit:**

"Yes, that helps. It definitely helps to kind of see what gets him going. Then, as far as schematically, when we get to the gameplanning of what he feels comfortable with, what he does well — then, obviously, we're going to bring some other ideas, where we want to challenge him to continue to get him to improve — but having that background is definitely beneficial for us, and that relationship that he has with him."

**On 'what is most impressive' about Herbert 'on tape':**

"As far as the tape of watching him? He's capable of doing everything, which is good. He's massive when you first see him, he's big. He is going to be able to take on all of the hits, which we're trying to limit, obviously, minimize those. But, he has the big arm, so he can stretch the field. He works good within the quick game. He really does well at all three levels. He's sharp, you can tell how quickly he's moving through his progressions. He's athletic. He has all the tools to be successful in all areas. We just have to be able to maximize that, complement that with a good run game, and we've got a chance to be pretty good with him."

**On if he was 'taken back' when he first saw Herbert in-person:**

"I actually saw him back when he came out. I was actually on the field at the Combine the year that he came out, so I got a chance to work with him there. I was impressed there, during that offseason at the Combine in Indy. Just to see him translate from that Combine into having immediate success was good to see because I always love good quarterback play. Being a former quarterback myself, I just love watching quarterbacks play, how they play the game — to see them transition from college to the pros and to see how they develop."

**On if he is 'aligned' with Run Game Coordinator/TEs Coach Andy Bischoff's perspective of quarterback play and 'taking advantage of Herbert's skillset, while also not putting too much on his shoulders':**

"Yes, definitely. Obviously, you want your quarterback to be able to handle everything, or at least understand everything that's going on. But, the more that you could take off their plate, especially when you have a center that can make the calls at the line of scrimmage — obviously, the quarterback has to know what's going on — but when you can take those off of his plate, it just slows down the mind, right? It's just less thank you for him. Now, he can just go out there and play and let his abilities shine, where he's not just thinking too much. That's kind of the balance that we want to have. We want to be able to run the ball well, where he's not always relying on him to win us the game. Just to be able to surround him with good scheme, good talent around him, is just going to make his game be able to elevate himself."

**On 'the vision' for the passing game:**

"We'll definitely complement what we do in the run game. Especially on first- and second-down, that's what you want, as far as you want to be able to establish the run. You have to be able to keep defenses off balance. When you're able to run the ball well, then the play-action is really huge. It makes it easier for the quarterback, easier for our receivers to get open, because of the reaction of the defense. We're going to be able to build off of that and continue to grow. Then, when you get to third down, third down is third down, you have to go get the first, if you can. We'll be able to spread it out, as well. I think one thing that, talking to Greg [Roman], is that we're going to have the availability to be multiple. We'll figure out what concepts we're going to be good at, and then continue to develop from there."

**On his 'assessment' of the wide receiver group:**

"Right now, we have a small group, as it is [laughter]. They know that, we know that. It's still early right now. Obviously, we have the Draft coming up. We'll see where that goes. Then, talking to [General Manager] Joe [Hortiz] and Jim [Harbaugh], obviously, we know that we have to fill the room. We'll get to that point when the time's right. But, we do have some guys here that we are excited about. [WR] Quentin Johnston, his development going into Year 2, some guys don't always just start fast in their rookie season, but they can make that jump in that second year. I love working with [Wide Receivers Coach] Sanjay [Lal] right now. I think that he is doing a great job. Obviously, he's a very experienced coach and worked with a lot of really good receivers. Just talking ball with him and how he is coaching them, I'm excited about developing all of these guys, once we can get them on the field. Right now, we're in the class room, so we're just really teaching these guys the terminology."

**On 'what he is looking for' out of the wide receiver group:**

"We're always going to be looking for variety. We have to fill the room, so we want guys that can make plays in all aspects. To be able to get on the field, you have to be able to block. So, you have to be able to do that. When you're talking about offense, I always think about basketball, right? You're going to have different roles. You want guys that can stretch the field, you want guys that are going to be quick at the possession [of the catch]. You want guys that can win quickly. You want guys that can win at the catch point. We have some of those guys we're going to build there, but we'll see what's available to us throughout the draft, throughout the finish of free agency, as well as working with the guys that are here, and then kind of go from there."

**On if he is 'looking for more depth at tight end':**

"We'll get there. Going into training camp, you usually have the numbers that you have. Then, as you develop an identity for your offense, we'll kind of iron that out."

**On working with Bischoff and 'building the passing game off of the run game':**

"Definitely. And Greg [Roman]. As a coaching staff, we're all going to be working together. There are our titles, but we're all going to be working together. Yes, you want to marry both the pass game and run game to make things look alike so that, pre-snap, defenses don't get a beat on what you guys are actually doing. We will be in constant communication there."

**On 'traits' that the team will 'look for in players within the passing game':**

"The number one thing is being able to get open, create space and give a throw for the quarterback. Guys that are great off of the line of scrimmage on their releases, if they're getting pressed, guys that are great at top of the route, and then guys that can make those tough catches. It's a combination of all three of those. Then, kind of go from there."

**On the 'one missing link for a receiver that the team doesn't have already':**

"We're looking for everything right now. We just lost two guys that have had some elite success in this league. Obviously, [former Chargers WR] Keenan [Allen] has done it for a long time, and then [former Chargers WR] Mike [Williams] had success, especially down the field, what he brings to the table with his length and size. We're going to see how these guys, that we have here, develop, and then we'll see where our other guys come in as we continue to fill the roster."

**On 'if there is a plan to make the deep ball a more efficient part of the offense':**

"We're going to take what the defense gives us. But, yeah, we have to be able to stretch the field. It always has to be a threat, especially with Justin's [Herbert] arm. He can push the ball down the field. Yes, we definitely have to be able to do that to open up things underneath."

## **RUN GAME COORDINATOR/TIGHT ENDS COACH ANDY BISCHOFF**

### **On building the offense with Offensive Coordinator Greg Roman:**

"It's been a rat race, but it's been fun every day. We have a great group of coaches that are committed to building a smart, tough, dependable team, to carry out the vision of [Head] Coach [Jim] Harbaugh. Being reunited with Greg is a beautiful thing. We had great success together in Baltimore. We expect to do the same here."

### **On building the rushing offense:**

"Here and now makes it better [than before]. You always look back and say, 'Man, we could have done this a little differently. We could have tightened this up a little more.' I think we're trying to create something epic. This morning in our team meeting with the offense, he [Greg Roman] used the word 'epic' in front of the guys and defined it. Why not create something different than has ever been done. As much success as we've all had in different places doing different things, none of that really matters. All that really matters is right now and creating that here."

### **On what gives the 'confidence' in building the rushing offense:**

"If you're a coach in this league and you don't have confidence, you're in the wrong league. This is vicious. I would just say it's a combination of all of those things. You have to come to work every day with great pride in what you do. You want to build the people up that are around you. That starts with your players. We want a group of men that are smart, tough, dependable, vicious players. It doesn't have to only involve the run game. Every down provides the opportunity for a competitive down. We want that and we're going to build that kind of team through [General Manager] Joe [Hortiz] and [Head Coach] Jim's [Harbaugh] leadership and through the vision of our offense. We have a staff of guys that all believe that. We're all working in unison, which is fun to see."

### **On what 'epic' looks like:**

"As an offense, what do you have to do? You have to score points. Epic at scoring points. You have to not turn the ball over. You want numbers that have never been seen before. Numbers in turning the ball over that give us the advantage we want to have. You can't have pre-snap penalties that hurt the play early. What else does it look like? You want to work together as a team. When it looks right, it's a beautiful thing. That doesn't matter if it's the run game, the pass game, play-action, whatever it is. We've all seen what a play looks like when 11 people work together. Certainly, we're excited about the people we have here to make that happen."

### **On QB Justin Herbert:**

"I think every great quarterback when surrounded by a quality run game has the opportunity to have plays that are a little bit of a breather play. Not everyone needs to function like [Hall of Fame QB] Peyton Manning did to win football games. Can he do that? I mean, the guy [Herbert] is brilliant. Intelligence-wise, this is a guys with rare intelligence. However, in our system of football, do we really need to put him under that much stress on every single down? The answer is no. How do you do that? You have a balanced offense that brings out the greatest strengths in everyone on the unit. Certainly, when you have a player of his caliber, you're excited about the outcome."

"In general, he's embracing everything that we're doing. I think he feels a fresh perspective that's centered on providing the best offense that he's played within. That's nothing against what he's played within, it's only focused on what we have our opportunity to do right here, right now. We want to protect him so he can be at his best. We want to provide a run game that can give us balance. We want to be an offense that's different and unique for him to be able to function at his best. He's embraced it all."

**On the tight ends:**

"When you start with [TE] Will [Dissly], you're talking about one of the three guys in the league that can own the C-gap, period. There's not many of them. This is a different kind of football league that we live in now. To have a tight end that can own the C-gap is rare. He's one of those guys. You start with him and his ability to get that done for you and then, let's not lose sight on what he can provide you in the passing game. This is a guy who catches the ball at a high percentage, in terms of his target-to-catch ratio, a guy that doesn't drop the football and who protects the football, doesn't fumble it. Then, you have a guy in [TE] Hayden [Hurst] — to me, you have six guys in the league who everybody wants. You name the six, you go with [49ers TE George] Kittle, you say [Giants TE Darren] Waller. Name whoever you want. Everybody wants those six guys. There's no reason that Hayden can't be that next guy. There's no reason. He has all the speed, all the hands, all the ability. Hayden just needs to find the right situation. We knew when we had him in 2019 that was the right situation for us. We couldn't control where it went from there, but we love the guy. We're nothing but happy to have this guy here. He will provide that athletic element to this offense that gives us an opportunity. Then, you have guys in this room that have been here in [TE Donald] DP [Parham Jr.] and [TE] Stone [Smartt], and [TE/FB] Ben Mason, who has had some history with this offense. We have five guys in this room that have an opportunity to compete and give us the room that we need to have. This offense needs tight ends to be productive whether we're running it, passing it, blocking — they have to be real tight ends. That's the kind of room that we're trying to build."

**On TE/FB Ben Mason:**

"The way we've always done it in this system is that Ben is an 'F'. In our offense, some will call him a fullback only. We don't want to limit that. When we started with [Ravens FB Patrick] Pat [Ricard], he was an 'F'. He turned into what he turned into. He actually started as a d-lineman and he turned into what he turned into. I was also fortunate enough to coach [49ers FB] Kyle Juszczyk, and he turned into what he turned into. You have this balance of guys. We'll bring out the greatest strengths that Ben has to offer. We'll also give other guys in the room the ability to compete for those spots. Not just limit to this is a fullback. They're an 'F' in our room. They'll function in every way they can to help us."

**On TE Donald Parham Jr.:**

"I still think Donald is a developing player. I would like to think him in our system will bring out the best of him. The message has been clearly sent in our room that whether you were here last year or not here, everybody has a clean slate. Everybody has the refresh button. We're not worried about what it looked like a year ago or two years ago. We're focused on what it's going to look like today. I can tell you, the men in our weight room are excited to train this guy. They're about the performances that he's giving early in the weight room. I look at this big, long individual with all of this mass and say, 'How can we corral this to benefit us?' In football, there are always examples of guys that didn't perform somewhere that will perform somewhere else. We're not worried about what was future and past. We're just worried about how we can help him make our team better today."

**On the offensive line:**

"This offense and this building is an o-line-centric space. Whatever it was in the past, I don't know. I didn't live here. I've been here for five weeks, but I can tell you this — this is going to be an o-line-centric building. When it comes to our strength program, it's built around the o-line. Everybody else fall in line. Some people don't value offensive linemen. We do. That will be shown in how we approach everything — from how we stretch to how we lift, to how we run the ball, to how we protect. This is a place where o-linemen are going to want to come and play because it's an o-line-centric space. We're going to raise these guys up and make them feel great about what they do, what they have to offer and not push them to the side and make them the afterthought. They are at the forefront of our thinking."

## **RUNNING BACK GUS EDWARDS**

### **On 'what attracted him to the Chargers':**

"I just thought that it was a great opportunity. The coaching staff that they put together is incredible. I'm really familiar with [Offensive Coordinator] Coach [Greg] Roman and his scheme, and I just wanted to be a part of it because I already know what his mindset is. Same with [Head] Coach [Jim] Harbaugh, I already know what his mindset is — being a physical team, I just wanted to be a part of that."

### **On playing for Roman with the Ravens:**

"He wants to run the ball and play off of that. We were very successful with his offense over in Baltimore. I love this scheme, the way that he schemes everything up, and just the whole mindset — the physicality — I really like."

### **On the amount of 'carryover' from the Ravens' scheme:**

"Football-wise, it's similar everywhere, but I would say that [Roman] has added a lot of new stuff, and some wrinkles in there, but the basics are still what we used to do in Baltimore."

### **On QB Justin Herbert and 'what the offense could look like':**

"I think that it's going to be great. Coach [Roman], I think, is for sure going to make a lot of adjustments to [QB Justin] Herbert's game, as well. That will be great. Seeing him on tape, I'm really excited to play with him and see what he does."

### **On the 'similarities' between Head Coach Jim Harbaugh and his brother, Ravens Head Coach John Harbaugh:**

"I see a lot of similarities with his brother. I don't know if he's a big fan of me saying that [*laughter*], but I see a lot of similarities. He's kind of like a player-coach. You're real comfortable around him. There are some coaches where, sometimes, if you see them walking down the hallway, you just walk the other way [*laughter*]. But I've been real comfortable around him. I know his mentality. He wants to win. He's been very into everything. He's been in the meeting rooms with us. He hasn't been staying away from the team. He's in the weight room with us. It's been great to just see his face around."

### **On the 'importance of familiarity' when 'switching teams':**

"It makes it a lot easier to adjust because you kind of know what to expect, especially with the terminology — it makes it kind of easier for you to memorize and everything. It helps my transition to be more smooth."

### **On his 'playstyle' and 'why it's a good fit here':**

"[Roman] wants a back to run downhill. A lot of his scheme, that's what it brings, a downhill game running the ball — maybe working some traps in there. But, he wants to see the backs go downhill and I think that's part of my game."

### **On if he 'has always been that way' as a 'downhill runner':**

"It's what works. I think that's what has been working for me a lot, just getting those tough yards. It's what my team has been asking of me, too. Not to say that I can't do other stuff, but I'm just doing what the team has asked."

### **On 'comparing his game' to former Chargers RB Austin Ekeler:**

"Well, I don't think that is what I'm being asked to do. I don't think that I'm being asked to do what Ekeler did here. I know that he was a really good runner. What my attention to his game was his ability to catch out of the backfield. Not saying that I can't or I haven't done that sometimes, but it's not what I'm known for. I don't think that we're similar in that way, but I'm excited to make plays for this team. I'm here for a reason and I know that I will be a big part of our success."

### **On developing as a pass-catching running back:**

"I think that when given the opportunity, when I'm trusted to be in there on those passing downs, I think that I'll produce, and I've proven that."

**On 'being the bell-cow running back':**

"I feel like that's what I have been able to do over my years in the league. I'm built for it and I'm ready for the opportunity."

**On what he 'anticipates' for his role:**

"Whatever I'm asked to do. Justin [Herbert] is our quarterback. He's a big part of our offense. If I'm in there, he will be protected. Whatever the coaches ask me to do, I'm ready to do that. What do I think that it's going to look like? I think that we're going to be a physical team. I think that is what the guys that we have been bringing in as of late, that's what everybody has in common — some bigger guys, some more physical guys. Just going off of what the last couple weeks have been bringing, I'd say that we're going to be physical."

**On the 'difference' between the Chargers and Ravens thus far:**

"Besides the colors, I'd say that it's pretty much the same [*laughter*]. I've been caught off guard by how much hard work these guys put in. Even the quarterback [Herbert], he's out there leading sets. It's caught me off guard by just how determined — and not saying that I didn't expect it — but it's definitely way more than I expected, of how determined the team is and how much work that they put in."

**On Chargers Hall of Fame RB LaDainian Tomlinson:**

"First of all, I was a big fan of LT growing up. When I think of the Chargers, that's the first thing that comes to mind. I would say his stiff arm. He had a lot of big stiff arms, and I would say that that is a part of my game."